

In the claims:

Please substitute the following full listing of claims for the claims as originally filed or most recently amended.

1. (Previously Presented) A method for removing static electricity in a fingerprint-reading apparatus provided with a fingerprint-reading portion on which a fingerprint is read in a state that a finger is put thereon, comprising the step of:

removing said static electricity stored on a finger of a user through a plate on said fingerprint-reading apparatus adjacent said fingerprint-reading portion prior to putting his finger on a fingerprint-reading portion while obtaining access to said fingerprint-reading portion by movement of a structure for covering said fingerprint-reading portion when not in use.

2. (Currently Amended) A method for removing static electricity in a fingerprint-reading apparatus, said apparatus being provided with a fingerprint-reading portion and having a cover, on which a fingerprint is read in a state that said cover is opened and a finger is put thereon, comprising the step of:

removing said static electricity stored on said finger of a user through a plate adjacent said cover when said cover is opened.

3. (Previously Presented) The method for removing static electricity as defined in claim 2, wherein: said step of removing said static electricity comprises the steps of:

- forming said cover of conductive material,
- connecting said cover with a ground, and
- conducting static electricity to a ground via said cover when said cover is opened by said finger of said user.

4. (Original) The method for removing static electricity as defined in claim 2, wherein:

said step of removing said static electricity comprises the steps of:

- providing a plate formed of conductive material for said fingerprint-reading apparatus,
- situating said plate on a position on which said user puts said finger to open said cover,
- connecting said plate with a ground, and
- conducting said static electricity stored on said finger of said user to said ground via said plate.

5. (Previously Presented) A method for removing static electricity in a fingerprint-reading apparatus which is contained in another apparatus and used after said another apparatus is opened, comprising the step of:

- providing fingerprint-reading portion on which a fingerprint is read in a state that a finger is put thereon for said fingerprint-reading apparatus, and
- removing said static electricity stored on said finger of a user when said user opens a main cover of said another apparatus.

6. (Original) The method for removing static electricity as defined in claim 5, wherein:

said another apparatus is provided with a lock-releasing button which is formed of conductive material and connected with a ground, and

said static electricity stored on said finger is removed via a lock-releasing button when said user opens said main cover of said another apparatus.

7. (Currently Amended) A fingerprint-reading apparatus, comprising:

a finger-reading portion on which a fingerprint is read in a state that a finger is put thereon,

a cover which closes said fingerprint-reading portion when said fingerprint-reading portion is not used, and is opened by said finger when said finger is put on said fingerprint-reading portion, and

a plate electrically connected with a ground and positioned adjacent said cover such that said plate is touched by said finger prior to said finger touching said fingerprint-reading portion as said cover is opened,

wherein said cover is formed of conductive material and connected with a ground.

8. (Original) The fingerprint-reading apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein:

said conductive material is conductive resin.

9. (Original) The fingerprint-reading apparatus defined in claim 7, wherein:

said conductive material is metal.

10. (Original) A fingerprint-reading apparatus, comprising:

    a fingerprint-reading portion on which a fingerprint is read in a state that a finger is put thereon,

    a cover which closes said fingerprint-reading portion, and

    a plate on which said finger is put to open said cover,

    wherein said plate is formed of conductive material and connected with a ground.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein:

    said conductive material is conductive resin.

12. (Original) The fingerprint-reading apparatus as defined in claim 10, wherein:

    said conductive material is metal.

13. (Previously Presented) A data terminal which begins to operate when a fingerprint is certified and a start-lock thereof is released, comprising:

a main body provided with said fingerprint-reading apparatus for reading said fingerprint, and

a main cover which is provided with a display, shields said fingerprint-reading apparatus and closes said main body when said data terminal is not used, and opens to expose said display bringing a side thereof into contact with said main body when said data terminal is used,

wherein said fingerprint-reading apparatus comprises:

a fingerprint-reading portion on which said fingerprint is read in a state that a finger is put thereon,

a cover which closes said fingerprint-reading portion when said fingerprint-reading portion is not used, and is opened by said finger when said finger is put on said fingerprint-reading portion, and

a plate adjacent said cover,

wherein said cover and said plate are formed of conductive material and connected with a ground.

14. (Original) The data terminal as defined in claim 13, wherein said conductive material is a conductive resin.

15. (Original) The data terminal as defined in claim 13, wherein said conductive material is a metal.

16. (Original) A data terminal which begins to operate when a fingerprint is certified and a start-lock thereof is released, comprising:

- a main body provided with a fingerprint-reading apparatus for reading said fingerprint, and

- a main cover which is provided with a display, shields said fingerprint-reading apparatus and closes said main body when said data terminal is not used, and opens to expose said display bringing a side thereof into contact with said main body when said data terminal is used,

- wherein said fingerprint-reading apparatus comprises:

- a fingerprint-reading portion on which said fingerprint is read in a state that a finger is put thereon,

- a cover which closes said fingerprint-reading portion, and

- a plate on which said finger is put to open said cover,

- wherein said plate is formed of conductive material and connected with a ground.

17. (Original) The data terminal as defined in claim 16, wherein: said conductive material is conductive resin.

18. (Original) The data terminal as defined in claim 16, wherein: said conductive material is metal.

19. (Original) A data terminal which begins to operate when a fingerprint is certified and start-lock thereof released, comprising:

    a main body provided with a fingerprint-reading apparatus for reading said finger print,

    a main cover which is provided with a display, shields said fingerprint-reading apparatus and closes said main body when said data terminal is not used, and opens to expose said display bringing a side thereof into contact with said main body when said data terminal is used, and

    a lock-releasing button which locks said main cover relative to said main body when said data terminal is used, and

    a lock-releasing button which locks said main cover relative to said main body so that said main cover closes said main body, and unlocks said main cover in order to open that,

    wherein said lock-releasing button is formed of conductive material and connected with ground.

20. (Original) The data terminal as defined in claim 19, wherein:

    said conductive material is plastic containing carbon fibers therein.